and coordinate with various enforcement agencies under the Central and State Governments for effective implementation of Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972.

(c) and (d) Due to the coordinated efforts made by the Central Government, State Governments and Non Governmental Organisations for effective implementation of the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972, a special thrust was given for tackling the problem of wildlife crimes. Recent seizures made in several parts of the country are an outcome of such coordinated efforts. The Wildlife Crime Cell will further improve the enforcement capabilities of Central and State Agencies.

Ban on fishing sharks and molluscs

2792. SHRI KARNENDU BHATTACHARJEE:
SHRI P. PRABHAKAR REDDY:

Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to the news-item captioned, "MPs back stir against shark-hunting ban" appearing in the Times of India on 26th November, 2001;

(b) whether Government have received any representation from the fishermen operating in the Coastal States of South India pleading for a withdrawal of ban on hunting and trading in Sharks and several species of molluscs;

(c) if so, the details thereof;

(d) the reaction of Government thereto and by when a decision in this regard is likely to be taken; and

(e) what other steps are proposed to be taken to safeguard and protect the livelihood of thousands of fishermen, affected by the ban?

THE MINISTER OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI T.R. BAALU): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) and (c) Fishermen, Members of Parliament and State Governments and Union Territory administration have represented to

the Central Government to reconsider the decision of imposing ban on hunting of all species of sharks & rays as well as 52 species of molluscs.

(d) and (c) Keeping in view the genuine problems of the poorer section of the fishermen community and after consulting the scientists and marine biology experts, the Government has decided to restrict the ban for the present to 10 shark species and 24 molluscs only.

Threat to Tadoba Tiger Reserve

2793. SHRI VIJAY J. DARDA: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware that the deforestation process has created a major threat to Tadoba Tiger Reserve in Chandrapur district of Maharashtra;

(b) whether it is a fact that Tadoba is the second biggest wild life reserve in Maharashtra;

(c) whether the Wild Life Conservation Department has expressed grave apprehension that if timely action is not taken to preserve the forest, it may cause huge damage to the Tadoba Tiger Reserve; and

(d) if so, what steps have been taken or are proposed to be taken, to stop deforestation in the area?

THE MINISTER OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI T.R. BAALU): (a) to (d) No deforestation in Tadoba Tiger Reserve has been reported, and it is also not the second largest Wildlife Reserve in the State of Maharashtra. Some apprehensions have been expressed regarding the likely advers impact of a proposed River Valley Project in Chandrapur District of Maharashtra on the migratory route of wild animals of Tadoba Tiger Reserve. The safeguards taken by the Government to conserve the wildlife and its habitats in Tiger reserves include:—

(i) Legal protection has been provided to wild animals including tigers against hunting and commercial exploitation under the provisions of the Wildlife (Protection) act, 1972.